

Message Text

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17
ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR MY
SUBJ: MALAYSIAN PRESS COVERAGE OF NAM SUMMIT -- AUGUST 17-19

1. KUALA LUMPUR PRESS HAS BEEN GIVING FRONT PAGE PLACEMENT TO
STORIES FROM COLOMBO, INCLUDING REPORTS BY "NEW STRAITS TIMES"
CHEONG MEI SUI AND BERNAMA'S RATAN SINGH, BUT ATTENTION HAS BEEN
SHARED BY PHILIPPINE EARTHQUAKE AND REPUBLICAN CONVENTION. REPORT
OF AUG 18 SPEECH TO SUMMIT BY PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN URGING
"EARLY CREATION OF ZONES OF PEACE" IN INDIAN OCEAN AND SOUTHEAST

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ASIA WAS HEADLINED IN AUG 19 NST WHILE TABLOID "THE STAR"

HEADLINED "DEADLOCK" BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND LAOS OVER LATTER'S ATTEMPT TO REPLACE PROPOSAL ON ENDORSEMENT OF KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION WITH LATTER'S DRAFT "SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA." COVERAGE HAS EMPHASIZED STRONG INDONESIAN AND SINGAPOREAN SUPPORT FOR MALAYSIAN POSITION, INCLUDING STATEMENT FROM SINGAPORE BY LEE KWAN YEW. NST CARRIED UNSOURCED REPORT THAT INDON FONMIN MALIK HAD ADMITTED POSSIBILITY THAT SOVIETS ARE BEHIND LAOTIAN EFFORT TO LAUD COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN INDOCHINA AND CONDEMN U.S. EFFORTS MAINTAIN MILITARY FORCES IN SEA.

2. WITH REGARD LAOTIAN PROPOSAL, RATAN SINGH REPORTED AUGUST 17 THAT FOREIGN MINISTER TENGKU RITHAUDDEEN TOLD HIM MALAYSIA WOULD STAND FIRMLY AGAINST ANY ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON ASEAN PEACE ZONE. RITHAUDDEEN REPORTEDLY INSISTED THAT ZPFN HAD "ALREADY BEEN ACCEPTED BY NAM, OTHER REGIONS HAD WON SUPPORT FOR SIMILAR MOVES, AND HE SAW NO REASON WHY MALAYSIAN PROPOSAL SHOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED AT COLOMBO DESPITE LAOTIAN PROPOSAL. FONMIN ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING MALAYSIA DID NOT WANT ITS PROPOSAL LINKED WITH THAT OF LAOS. REPORTS DATED AUGUST 18 INDICATE PANEL CHAIRED BY INDIA, AND INCLUDING MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, VIETNAM AND LAOS HAD BEEN SET UP TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE.

3. COMMENT: AS PRESS RELEASES HERE HAVE EMPHASIZED, MALAYSIANS MAIN HOPE AT CONFERENCE WAS TO GET REAFFIRMATION OF NAM SUPPORT FOR THIRD WORLD ECONOMIC THEMES, PARTICULARLY FOR CREATION OF INTERNATIONALLY-SUPPORTED BUFFER STOCK AND OTHER SCHEMES TO PROTECT RAW MATERIAL PRODUCERS FROM PRICE FLUCTUATIONS. MALAYSIANS MUST BE VERY DISAPPOINTED AND UPSET OVER LAOTIAN INITIATIVE AND THEIR LACK OF SUCCESS IN SUBDUING IT AS IT PLACES THEM IN UNTYPICAL POSITION OF SWIMMING AGAINST THE RADICAL TIDE. (THEY PREFER TO DEMURE QUIETLY AND DO NOT LIKE FLOOR AND CORRIDOR FIGHTS.) THE POSSIBILITY THAT LAOS IS REALLY A SURROGATE FOR VIETNAM ALSO MUST PAIN THEM AS THEY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED OVER THE PAST MONTH OR TWO BY SIGNS THAT HANOI IS PREPARED TO ENTERTAIN FRIENDLY AND PERHAPS COOPERATIVE BILATERAL RELATIONS. UNDERHILL

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